



# Finchingfield Parish Council

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26<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Dear Councillor Johnson

## **Finchingfield Bridge**

It is some months since we corresponded by letter about ECC's proposed plans for works on Finchingfield Bridge. It was with considerable relief, following the public meeting here in November 2015, to be advised of a new proposal that would avoid the need for a lengthy road diversion for all traffic during the period that the work took place.

The proposal is to build a new bridge beside the existing bridge, to keep the existing bridge open to traffic other than HGVs during the building works and on completion of the new bridge, to convert the old one to a pedestrian walkway.

You will be aware of the concerns that this proposal has given rise to, both the impact visually and also in terms of road safety. However, in the two preview meeting that have taken place with local councillors (parish, district and county) about the revised proposals, in the public exhibition in Finchingfield in February and at the Annual Parish Assembly earlier this month, there has been no suggestion from your colleagues that a second bridge is the best solution but rather that a temporary bridge could not be afforded.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that if it were not for cost, the preferred solution would be to replace the existing bridge by a new one in approximately the same place, but with all the design improvements your team have been working on.

With that in mind, we have been asking Highways what the difference in cost would be between what is being proposed and what it would cost to build a replacement bridge and have a temporary bridge in placed during the period of works.

In the most recent preview meeting and also at the presentation your colleagues gave at this month's Parish Assembly, which was attended by the local media, a cost difference of £200,000 was quoted, between £850,000 and £650,000 works costs respectively.

In a personal capacity I had already emailed an offer to your officials that my wife and I would make a personal financial donation of £100,000 towards closing this shortfall to allow the preferred option to take place. I repeated that offer at the Parish Assembly and do so now in writing. We are able and willing to make this donation in order to achieve the result all would want and can make the cash available at any time and without conditions.

The Parish Council have recently been given a summary of four quotes obtained by a local group of businesses for the installation of a temporary bridge. I have no engineering experience, so do not know whether the specification of a 7.3m wide span, 28m length, loads up to 40 tonnes and an operating period of 4-6 months is reasonable or not. However, what I can comment upon is the considerable difference in cost between these figures and the cost of a temporary bridge quoted by your engineers, which in all four cases the indicative quotes are £200,000 or more lower.

Whilst I do not know the process by which Highways obtains quotes for works of this type to ensure best use of public money, I do wonder whether seeking further quotes might lead to a lower figure and one that will close the shortfall with the financial donation I have offered.

Yours sincerely

Graham Tobbell  
Chairman